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I have lived in San Francisco for 18 years. The city is distant from my home in South Dakota not ^{only} in miles but also culturally. ~~But~~ I have wanted to ^{live} there since I was nine years old.

I read an ~~article~~ in a magazine article that ~~described~~ ~~San Francisco~~ seemed to describe San Francisco as a city of ^{at age 9} /dwns and homosexuals. Although, I did not understand what homosexual meant, I somehow knew it had something to do with me. My destiny was in San Francisco. And this I was certain of as a child.

My grandmother and I used to go cherry picking. She carried her lard pail and I had a little white one with red trim. I talked to my grandmother non stop while we walked ~~to~~ along.

I always talked to her about San Francisco, and that I was going to live there and save the world too. She always listened to me. She never told me to be quiet,

she never said inela which is quiet in Lakota.

My grandmother, in her wisdom, allowed ^{me} to talk ^{incessantly} about my dreams and my ideas about the world. ✱

Because of my grandmother,
I learned to dream and I learned to exercise
analytical thinking. I just didn't accept
that stars are stars. In the summertime,
I used to go out at night with my
flashlight, point it to the stars and
flash away. I ~~never~~ believed there
were beings up there, perhaps more Lakota,
and I wanted them to know where I
was.

From an ^{early} ~~flinky~~ age, I developed a sense
of myself as being different. My being
Indian, Lakota was a major part of
this distinction. 2

And within that ^{identity} was my strong desire to capture my dreams, to realize my destiny.

I also knew my pursuit of dreams and destiny ~~would~~ probably meant leaving the reservation.

Whenever my grandparents and I visited Aunt Hermine and Uncle Georgie, they often made jokes ~~were~~ about the Indian relocation program and which Indian hitchhiked home first.

I used to find it embarrassing to listen to the stories because I didn't

understand what was funny about ~~the~~ the
failure of these Indian people. The jokes
^{and} stories were not told with maliciousness but
I began to wonder about ~~any~~ whether I
too would fail off the reservation. ~~And~~
~~the~~

I had only one positive role model of
someone who was successful off the³
reservation, our relative Bea Medicine.

My grandparents told me stories about
her diligence. And that is what
they expected of me

My grandparents had a small ranch. Our house, barn, corral, chicken coop, pidgeon coop and cellar were on a hill, next to other hills. ~~The~~ The ~~Utah~~ Lonesome Buttes were to the north, sitting on the prairie, mysterious and solitary. My uncle visited the buttes often to observe the eagles nesting there.

The Rattlesnake Buttes were to the west.

~~Ever~~ There was talk on the reservation about UFO's frequenting these Buttes. Everyone had a story about seeing unusual lights around the buttes. It was also the home of deep thunder claps.

to ~~hear~~ rattlesnakes. Not very many people
went up to the Buttes because of the stories
and the snakes. But I really liked to
go there because the buttes echoed
the strangeness and differentness ^{that} I felt about
myself. 4

In the summer, when the thunder and
lightning came, my grandfather would
wake us up in the middle of the night
to wait out the severe storms in our
cellar.

He opened the tin door to the cellar
first to make certain that the cellar
deafened the thunder claps. "

was free from rattlesnakes. Then we sat

in the cellar listening to the storm.

The cellar had one large room and a

smaller one. There was always a sweet

smell of earth mingled with the cigarette

smoke from my grandparents' salem's.

The conversation was always the same

and never in english. It was about

the thunder and lightning beings striking

hard at the rattlesnake buttes.

I always felt when we were in the

cellar that being Lakota was as powerful

as the lightning strikes and the
deep thunder claps. 5

But ^{also} I often brooded about being Indian because my future seemed bleak. My town had less than 500 people with very few stores and there was very little entertainment. I could read, watch television or play.

~~There was~~
I did get some enjoyment from brooding because what I was really doing was trying to understand about life and how is it that we begin where we do, what are our choices in life and

where does our support come from to pursue our dreams.

~~Sometimes in early evening as I was~~

~~walking home from my cousins~~

I was fortunate to live near ~~to~~ my cousins

house so we spent a great deal of

time together. I'd ~~return~~ ^{walk} home in

the early evening, enjoying the soft

evening air, listening to the birds make

loud noises as they settled down for the night.

I had a choice of ~~going~~ walking home

by three paths. One of the paths

was the longest but also the easiest.

The second path was the short cut but it meant climbing over several barbed wire fences and walking through tall prairie grass.

The third path was my favorite. It was ~~best~~ ~~best~~

followed the creek ~~and~~ and it was the one which challenged me the most.

The path was close to an old burial ground so I often ~~always~~ ~~myself~~ felt nervous about walking there but I also wanted to be close to them. I'd walk fast for a while and then slow down. But it was very much a

challenge to walk through ^{there}. My heart
always beat fast and I was quite alone
fighting something unseen, not ~~necessar~~ necessarily
bad, but ~~it was~~ to me it was facing
the unknown.

And that path is also the one I
choose for myself in this life. These few
moments ~~in~~ in my childhood that
I have described provided glimpses to
my future, to my life now. I

~~stop~~ speak about my background, my childhood
because it provided me with a

a solid foundation to deal with the
unknown. It is from there that many
things emanate and flourish. It is from
there that I find the fortitude to live
away from my Lakota people.

My grandparents always told me that I
could do anything I wanted or be anything
I wanted.

It is very important in an Indian
child's life to have ~~that~~ ~~that~~ that
message reinforced, and even as
an adult we are faced with
other difficulties.

Throughout the years, I have found myself
in many interesting and unlikely situations.

Sometimes with other Indian people and

Sometimes I am the only Indian.

And then I became the ~~exp~~ Indian

expert. & I should know ~~every~~

~~about~~ ~~and~~ every ^{cultural and ~~spirit~~ religious} detail about

being Hopi Zuni Navajo Kiowa

Cheyenne or Papago. And I

also should ^{thoroughly} know each tribe's history.

Fortunately in my teen years, I attended

an intertribal school in Santa Fe, New

Mexico so I was able to

learn about
meet other Indian tribes and nations, ~~and learn~~
~~about their people.~~

We have strong opinions

My brief years in Santa Fe were wonderful

in that way but also difficult. It

seems life is like that, many good

things happen but there must be challenges

^{along the way} for us to deal with, to make us

stronger.

I came out in Santa Fe as a lesbian with

another Indian woman on a small

campus of about 500 Indian students.

This was in 1972, 1973^a so it was very
scary for us. I ~~had~~^{knew} we would
face ostracism and we did. A few
of our straight friends finally did accept us
but it took a while.

During my last year of high school, I
tried to commit suicide because I was
very clear^{with myself} that I wanted to marry
women not men and there was ~~no~~
nothing on the reservation which supported
lesbians or gay men at all. Since that
time I look at the high

Suicide rate of Indian people very differently,

I know some of those suicides are

because they believed they could not be

openly gay or lesbian as an Indian.

When we discuss diversity of Indian

culture it isn't just that each tribe

and nation has its own language, ceremonies

or family structures but it is also because

Indian people are heterosexual, lesbian,

gay bisexual and transgender. I know

of one Indian person who is a transsexual.

And her/his grandmother accepts that."

In recent years, ~~more~~ Indian people who
are two spirited people ~~being~~ are becoming
more visible in ^{our} ~~their~~ communities.

There are several books which ~~have~~
illustrate the Indian tradition, which is ~~almost~~
~~uniform~~ consistent with almost all Indian nations,
that homosexuality was accepted, not just
tolerated but accepted. And that with some
of the Indian tribes, the homosexuals or
winkles were even revered as special
people.

I've heard straight Indian people talk
about homosexuality as the white man's
disease but it's homophobia that is
the whiteman's disease. Smallpox
~~near~~ decimated many of our people
and so has homophobia. ~ ~~it~~ ~~wept~~

Recently at Phil ~~Tindley~~

I spent some

This summer in New York City, the
first conference on HIV and AIDS
in the lesbian and gay Indian community
was held.

~~There were~~

Between 70 and 100 ~~that~~ ~~people~~

Indian people attended the conference. It

was really very moving on many different

levels. ~~There were several Indian~~

~~people~~ The

Several Indian people were HIV positive

or had full blown AIDS. When

we gathered for the ~~pl~~ plenaries, I

often watched Phil Tingley. Phil

was Kiowa from Anadarko Oklahoma.

He was the ~~exec~~ executive director

of the American Indian AIDS Institute in
San Francisco. Phil arrived in San
Francisco about the same time I did
when we were in our late teens so
in some sense Phil and I grew up
together. I always admired him. He
was ^{as a leader} active in the ^{Indian} community and
out in the community as a gay man. He
was a gourd dancer and danced at
our local powwows."

Although he was pretty sick in July,
Phil still came to our ^{AIDS} conference.

And I watched him alot during the conference.

His skin had turned very dark from the
AIDS ^{treatment} drugs and as I watched him.

I saw that he behaved as an
elder. Some of the old people on
my reservation used to sit the same
way he did, leaning over, looking
at their skin, touching their ~~skin~~
hands and arms, feeling the texture
of old skin. Phil was doing
the ~~same~~ same thing. ~~He was doing the same thing.~~

Many in this nation were stunned and overwhelmed
 by Magic Johnson's announcement of being
 HIV positive but I have to say that
 watching Phil during the conference made
 me proud to know him ^{and} ~~but~~ also
 stunned ^{me} that once again Indian people
 are fighting a terrible illness. It's not
 that we've ever stopped fighting illness but
 somehow this virus ~~is~~ is ^{more} ~~even~~ difficult
 for me to comprehend. ~~as~~ It has
 taken many Indian lives in San Francisco.
 And I don't want any Indian person

to die alone, unaccepted by their own because of a disease or because of sexual orientation.

At Phil's recent memorial service many straight Indian men and women spoke on his behalf. They talked about their

respect for him and what he has done for our Indian community. The

most poignant eulogy was from a Dakota from North Dakota who said Phil

had taught him to accept everyone

and that if he had a negative

opinion, he learned to keep

it to himself. His eulogy wasn't full of
big words nor ^{was it} grammatically or even
politically correct. But he was
honest in talking about how he
used to dislike gay men and lesbians,
~~and through working with Phil and~~
~~talking with him did he learn~~
~~there wasn't a lot to be afraid of~~
~~or fear.~~

He learned from working with and talking with
Phil that there wasn't a lot to be afraid of
or fear.

As very important for us as Indian People
as we reclaim and revitalize our ~~traditions~~,
our language and traditions ~~there~~ to
include the heritage and contributions of
Indian lesbians and gay men. And to ~~under~~
know and understand that being lesbian or
gay is an Indian tradition.

My grandparents taught me that I am
important and they treated me that way,
as a special person. They taught me
to be diligent and have self-respect.

They wanted me to do something for my
people. Since ~~our~~ the Indian health

system and services are so inadequate, they
wanted me to become a doctor, a surgeon
but ~~soon I knew~~ like my mom,
I nearly faint at the sight of blood so
I decided that really wasn't my path.

I'm not going to be the Indian attorney
who litigates to have our treaties honored
or our political prisoners freed. I'm not
going to be the activist who secures
the return of Indian remains to a
proper burial site, who will free
our remains from further desecration
by being put on display. I'm

not going to be the Indian person who works
to find Indian homes for all the Indian
children who ^{need homes and Indian grandparents} ~~are waiting to be adopted~~ ^{and parents}..

I'm not the Indian person who is going to
~~set~~ develop mental health services that
include traditional Indian values.

~~There is an endless list of programs~~
~~and projects that need to be Indian~~
~~led, Indian generated, Indian staffed.~~

I've chosen instead to be a visible
Indian lesbian so that other ^{Indian} lesbians
and gay men know ~~there~~ ^{are} ~~some~~
that they are not alone.

My contribution to the Indian community is different than what my grandparents envisioned but it is true to what they instilled in me.

The survival of Indian^{people} isn't just dependent on one thing. It is a combination of many aspects. ^{Formal} Education is ~~an~~ very important. All universities and colleges have a ~~moral~~^{moral} responsibility and ethic to ensure that Indian students graduate. A Native American Studies program or department is an important feature of this moral

responsibility. When I attended the San Francisco Art Institute, I was the only Indian and it was very lonely. It was my first experience outside of the Indian community. But if the Art Institute had made recruitment of Indian students a priority and then provided support for Indian students, my experience at this major art school might have been very different. I've learned a great deal about myself over the years how I live as a Lakota in a large city. I always

try to bring the prairie to my city home. I

Know when I really miss my home and

it isn't enough to be around other Indians

but when I miss Lakota people, our

potatoe salad, our soup, our fry bread

I pray as best as I can in

Lakota. I ask Tunkasila to

help me through those times, I

ask my grandmother and my grandfather

to help me. Sometimes when I'm

in meetings with people or elected officials

or think they're really important and I

feel disconnected from them or invisible,

I remember that I am not a simple
Indian woman who is sometimes reserved,
Sometimes stoic. I know I sit
~~long~~ with the history of my people,
the strength of culture as it has
survived, I sit with my
grand parents, their grand parents and
their grand parents and then I
I know I have a place in this
world. I know that I
am working to make a place for
other Indian people who are like
me.

ALC 63
CAMERON

SPEECHES

AT THE MEMORIAL FOR PHIL TINGLEY, [1991] [34p]

1/17

Memorial Services held:
September 13, 1991

The Bahai' Center
170 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA

Anyone wishing to send flowers to the family
(Gladiolas were Phil's favorite)
can send them to:

SMITH FUNERAL HOME
301 West Oklahoma
Anadarko, OK 73005
(405) 247-3701
(by Saturday)

American Indian AIDS Institute would like to recognize the
following agencies for their support and time:

Friendship House Association of American Indians
Native American Alcohol Program
Urban Indian Health Board
Income Rights Group
Early Advocacy and Care for HIV
San Francisco AIDS Office

And the many individuals that helped. Thank you.



VIRGIL PHILLIP TINGLEY, JR.
1/25/41-9/10/91
51

Phil, a Kiowa Indian, was born in Lawton, Oklahoma. He came to the
Bay Area in the late 60's, graduated from San Francisco State in 1971 and
acquired his Masters of Social Work in 1982.

He worked for Corporation for American Indian Development as the
ICWA coordinator until 1984, advancing to Director of Human Service until
1987. In 1988, Phil became the Executive Director of the American Indian AIDS
Institute, where he worked until his passing.

Phil was a member of the Gourd Dance Society. He was noted for
research and presentations on intergenerational Post Traumatic Syndrome and
other Indian cultural issues. For several decades he was especially active in
social issues concerning American Indians. He has been the president of the
National Indian Social Workers Association, has been a board member of the
Urban Indian Health Board, and a member of the Native American AIDS Advi-
sory Board.

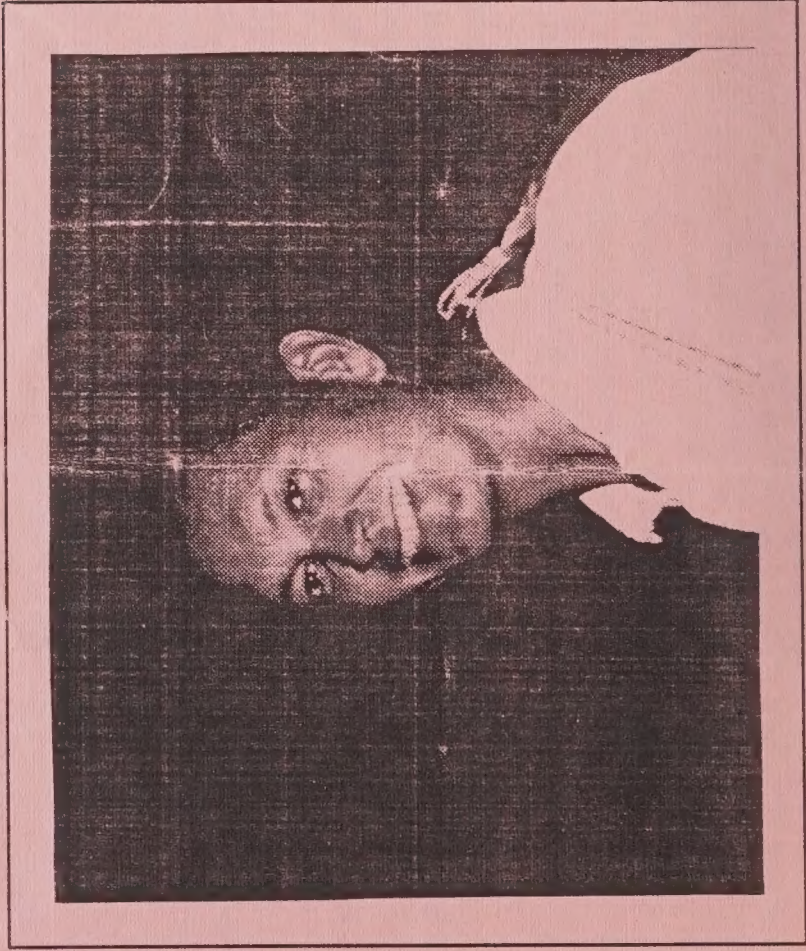
FOOTPRINTS

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with *Grandfather*. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to *Grandfather*.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back and the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned *Grandfather* about it. “*Grandfather*, you said that once I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why, when I needed you most you would leave me.”

Grandfather replied, “My son, my precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your time of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”



MEMORIAL SERVICE
September 13, 1991

*"Crystaline Butterfly dreams,
Encased with candy colored care,
Flutter from my heart to yours:
In Life one should not just say:
"THANKS"*

"THIS AWKIE"
(Phil Tingley)
1990

PROGRAM

Master of Ceremonies.....Martin Waukazoo

Opening Prayer.....Darrel Standing Elk

" There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in this Place" ...Wynne DuBray

Speakers: Bonnie Guillory, AIAI Board Chair
 Erna Pahe, AIAI Board Member

Floor Open to Others wishing to Speak

"Till We Meet Again"Helen Waukazoo

Closing Prayer.....Micheal Raymond

FEAST

